

# *Our Stories*



Inspirational Stories of Triumph and Dedication from the  
**Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services**





## About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

*T*he Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, established in 1984, is the public agency charged with the duty of establishing, managing and advocating a system of services in partnership with parents, relatives, foster parents and community organizations which ensures that:

- Children are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Families who can provide a safe home environment for children are respected and strengthened; children whose families are unable to provide a safe home environment are provided temporary homes which support optimum growth and development;
- Children in temporary homes receive safe, secure, nurturing and stable permanent homes in a timely manner;
- Youth who reach adulthood under our care are provided the opportunity to succeed.

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services serves families and children of all ages, races, religions and economic backgrounds. The department provides services to children and families through 17 offices located throughout Los Angeles County including Los Angeles, Lancaster, San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley and the South Bay area.

David Sanders, Ph.D., became the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services in March 2003. As Director, Dr. Sanders oversees all operations of DCFS, a department that has an annual budget of more than \$1.3 billion and approximately 6,100 staff. Dr. Sanders has established three key goals for the department:

- **IMPROVED PERMANENCE**  
Shortening the timelines for permanency for children removed from their families with a particular emphasis on reunification, kinship and adoption. This also includes reductions in the emancipation population.
- **IMPROVED SAFETY**  
Significantly reducing the recurrence rate of abuse or neglect for children investigated and reduce the rate of abuse in foster care.
- **REDUCED RELIANCE ON OUT-OF-HOME CARE**  
Reduce reliance on removing children from their homes through expansion of alternative community-based strategies to help families.



## Introduction

For the past 20 years, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has provided assistance and services to thousands of children and families. Over the years, the department, along with the children and families DCFS has served, have experienced struggles and challenges. But there have also been countless stories of dedication, success and new beginnings. In this brochure, we feature just a few of these stories from:

- **SOCIAL WORKERS** who are the backbone of the department and work diligently every day to help children and families;
- **FOSTER YOUTH** who work to overcome adversity and create successful lives;
- **FAMILIES** who heroically choose to adopt or foster children, and the biological parents who strive to keep their families together; and
- **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** who provide a wide range of support, encouragement and inspiration for families, foster youth and the department.

As we honor all of these dedicated and courageous individuals and recognize our successes, including a recent reduction in the amount of children in foster care, we recognize that there is always work to be done.

Everyday, we look for permanent and loving homes for children and work to assist families struggling to stay safely together. In coming years, DCFS will continue to work on innovative practices and strive to achieve its goals of providing permanency and safety for all children and families we serve.

We hope you find “Our Stories” inspiring.



Dr. David Sanders

Director

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services





JESSICA AMBROZ

JOSE GALINDO



STEVEN NEWMAN



NAPOLEON SADSAD



**“Foster kids need to see foster kids being successful.”**

— Jessica Ambroz, DCFS social worker

## JESSICA AMBROZ From the Streets to Social Work

DCFS social worker Jessica Ambroz knows the foster care system all too well. As a child, she moved from homeless shelter to homeless shelter, often living on the streets of Boston with a mentally ill mother. Jessica was eventually taken into foster care and placed in a series of foster homes.

Despite the constant uncertainty in her life, from a young age Jessica was determined to succeed. She did well in school, went to college and completed a Master's Degree in social work. Now, as a social worker, Jessica enjoys working with

families and often serves as a mentor and big sister for those on her caseload. She takes an extra interest in all of the families on her caseload, accompanying a truant child to school and sitting in class with them, providing beds and getting bus passes and taking teen moms on tours of universities to put the spotlight on education.

She also acts as a detective, searching for families, friends, teachers or counselors to connect clients with so they can count on someone if they emancipate from the foster care system. Jessica even ran the Los Angeles Marathon to raise thousands of dollars for the DCFS

Children's Trust Fund.

This dedicated social worker continues to be an inspiration and mentor by speaking to former foster youth and telling them they *can* succeed. “Foster kids need to see foster kids being successful,” she says. ■

## JOSE GALINDO Caring for Sick Children

Medical Unit Social Worker Jose Galindo had one of the toughest days in his professional career two years ago. He had recently taken over the case of a 15-year-old boy in foster care who had been in a coma for several years. The child

died of his medical complications and since he had no immediate family, Jose found himself charged with not only arranging the funeral for the child, but also finding the money to pay for it. By securing a generous donation from a local cemetery, Jose was able to give the boy the dignity he deserved in death.

“I had to treat this child like he was my own,” explains Jose wistfully recalling the experience. “You get so attached to these children.”

Jose is just one of more than 20 DCFS social workers who specialize in handling the cases of medically fragile foster children. Dubbed “Medical Placement Workers,” they often have to arrange funerals for children who pass away on their caseloads and work through the complicated medical system to provide care for their

**"I'll do whatever  
is necessary to help  
a family."**

— Steven Newman, DCFS social worker

# Social Workers

children who manage to thrive despite their conditions. Jose, who dreams of going to medical school, says he uses Family Preservation and Family Group Decision-Making to help keep children with their families and help families succeed. Through this position, he's also been educated in the medical system, particularly in efficiently acquiring medical resources and dealing with medical professionals.

Jose sees one of the biggest challenges in his job as a public misinterpretation about what social workers do. "People need to get to know us," he says. He also urges more community members to open up their hearts and homes to medically fragile foster children. "We need more placements." ■

## **NAPOLEON SADSAD** **Soldier Social Worker** **Raises Flag to Honor** **Foster Children**

Even though he was thousands of miles away, dodging gunfire and working in 120-degree heat in Iraq and Kuwait, DCFS social worker and naval reservist Napoleon Sadsad knew he wanted to do something special for the children in Los Angeles County foster care. In a show of honor and support, Napoleon dedicated an American flag to foster children and flew it over Camp 93 in Kuwait where he was stationed with the Seabees during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I thought it would be a neat thing to do," says Napoleon of the military flag dedication program. "I wanted to show support for the department and support for the children and families we serve."

Shortly after its dedication, the flag and an official certificate marking the event was shipped back to the DCFS regional office in Pasadena where Napoleon works. It is now proudly displayed in the office.

Just like being a social worker, Napoleon experienced a range of emotions as a soldier, from the fear of the unknown, to potentially violent situations to the satisfaction of helping children in need. Now that he's back home, Napoleon approaches his work with a renewed sense of dedication. "I feel I am a voice for the children," he says. "It is very fulfilling and I've always rooted for the underdog." ■

## **STEVEN NEWMAN** **Going the** **Extra Distance** **to Help Families**

Described as an inspiration by his colleagues, adoption social worker Steven Newman has proven he literally goes the extra distance to help children and families. Recently, Steven was sought out by County Counsel to supervise and orchestrate the permanent plan for a 7-year-old American child with medical and emotional challenges living in the Czech Republic with an

aunt and uncle.

Steven enlisted the assistance of International Social Services-USA, a non-profit organization linked with social service agencies in the Czech Republic, and hopped on a plane to Prague where he spent time meeting with the child and family in order to come up with plans for a permanent home. Due to his familiarity with the Czech Republic, he was able to locate professional resources there. Steven was also able to provide excellent case management and supervision for this case. Not only did he provide the family with much needed crisis counseling and emotional support, Steven connected the child's extended family to many resources including legal, psychological and educational, that helped the family overcome difficult obstacles and make sure a permanent plan for their nephew could be achieved.

Steven also appeared several times before a Brno Municipal Court judge in the Czech Republic to help coordinate efforts between Czech authorities and DCFS to resolve the child's legal status. The extraordinary casework Steven provided to the child and family made sure that this child was provided with a permanent, loving home.

To this day, Steven still maintains regular contact with the family he helped through phone and e-mail several times a month.

"I'll do whatever is necessary to help a family. If any barrier arises causing a delay in the adoption process, I'll search for a way to eliminate it," says Steven. ■

clients. Many of the children supervised by these workers are so fragile they can only be placed in nursing home settings. Their ailments range from comas, to neurological disorders, to complications due to abuse such as drug exposure and shaken baby syndrome.

Jose has children on his caseload with ailments including HIV infection, asthma, failure to thrive, microcephaly, cerebral palsy, diabetes, hepatitis and heart problems. Some are in medically certified foster homes and some are in hospitals because their parents have abused them or are incapable of dealing with the extreme medical needs of medically fragile children.

Although social workers in the Medical Placement Unit encounter many emotionally tough days, there are glimmers of success with



**“These youth are smart and sophisticated. They know what they want. They just need help getting there.”**

*— Berisha Black, former foster youth*

## Foster Youth

### **BARRY BARRIOS**

#### **Youth Uses ‘Iron Will’ to Reach Academic Success**

By the time 18-year-old Barry Barrios had made it to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the fall of 2003, he already had ambitious plans to become a doctor and a distinct advantage over other students. At the end of his junior year in high school, Barry applied and earned admission to MIT’s MITE’S program where he mastered six classes ranging from Advanced Physics to Chemistry. Now, at 19, he’s at MIT and majoring in physics and biochemistry.

But Barry still looks back at his last year in high school with fond memories. That spring, Barry participated in Celebration I, a ceremony honoring foster care and probation youth who graduate from high school and have achieved academic excellence. On a June evening, Barry proudly joined 150 other graduating foster and probation youth who participated in the DCFS Independent Living Program designed to prepare them for the life transition to independence. He describes it as an event that marked the beginning of a life journey filled with high goals.

For Barry, who grew up with foster parents and is described by his social worker and Independent Living Program coordinator as having

an “iron will” to succeed, the event also signified that he can triumph over adversity. With the help of a scholarship from The Teague Family Foundation and a full academic scholarship, he made it to MIT and is on his way to reaching his dream of being a doctor. Now Barry will have to use that “iron will” to get him through medical school.

“I am confident that all of my academic achievements will help me to achieve my life goals. They have already enriched my life,” says Barry. ■

### **BERISHA BLACK**

#### **Working From the Inside**

Berisha Black believes in working from the inside to improve the foster care system. After spending 15 years in the system, Berisha, now 26, knows first hand the feelings and struggles of foster youth. She also knows about opportunity, hard work, perseverance and the unconditional love of a foster mother who came into her life at a critical time.

Looking back, Berisha describes her last foster care placement as “the last straw.” At 17, she ran away and never wanted to go back. She begged her social worker to help her emancipate early. But instead of cutting her loose, the social worker introduced Berisha to the woman who would change her life.

Known affectionately as “my grandmother” by Berisha, her new foster mother, Ms. Mitchell, welcomed her with open arms and encouraged Berisha to make something of her life, starting with enrolling in college. The 17-year-old took the advice.

“She became my greatest role model. She loves you for who you are,” says Berisha. Berisha says her grandmother always remained positive and willing to listen.

After emancipating at age 19, Berisha enrolled in college and graduated from California State University, Los Angeles with a bachelor’s degree in social work. While in college, Berisha joined the California Youth Connection, a foster youth advocacy group, and got involved in public speaking to shed light on life in foster care. She also worked as a peer counselor in the DCFS Independent Living Program. She helped create the State Ombudsman for Foster Youth position and worked to create programs to help foster youth throughout the state.

“I love working with youth and empowering them,” says Berisha. “These youth are smart and sophisticated. They know what they want. They just need help getting there.”

Named as Woman of the Year for 2004 by the Los Angeles County Women’s Commission and the Board of Supervisors, Berisha now works as the DCFS Emancipation Ombudsman where she



**BERISHA BLACK AND HER “GRANDMOTHER”**

BRIAN JOYNTER



mentors foster youth who are about to leave the system, or who have recently emancipated and are now on their own. She also advocates for services for youth. Berisha is pursuing an MBA and also chairs the DCFS Director's Youth Council, a group of former and current foster youth who are working with the department on improvements for youth.

"I look at foster care as the culture I grew up in. Those experiences have become a part of who I am," she says. ■

### BRIAN JOYNTER Building His Own Future

A few years ago, 18-year-old Brian Joynter was heading down a dangerous path. He was in trouble for using drugs and ditching school. When he did go to school he had no motivation. He had been living with one aunt and when he became too much to handle, moved in with another aunt and her husband, Rev. Ben Shortridge.

In November 2002, Brian dropped out of school and began to just "hang out." His uncle gave him chores to do, but they didn't get done. In spite of his difficulties, Brian remained close to his family and had their support. Then, a turning point came.

Tracy Harrington, Brian's social worker, referred the family for an Emancipation Conference. As a part of the DCFS Family Group Deci-

sion-Making program, the family members came together at the conference to help form a plan for Brian's future. Brian seemed receptive.

During the first of four meetings, Brian and his family created an ambitious plan with an idea Brian came up with at the core. He would enroll in YouthBuild, a construction training program which would also allow him to get his GED. Brian had heard about the program though one of his sisters.

But change did not come easy for Brian. At YouthBuild, Brian was almost expelled for fighting. But again, he maintained support from his family and social worker. Brian's YouthBuild counselor also went to bat for him and persuaded the YouthBuild staff to reenroll him. She succeeded and Brian resumed the program.

Through YouthBuild, Brian was able to bring his grade point average up to a 3.3 from 0.4. The school believes that the young people must take responsibility for their own life, family, the program and their community. YouthBuild also expects the graduates to give back to the community with 900 hours donated to Americorp.

Brian eventually became a star student, graduating in June 2004. He emancipated from foster care a month later, moved into transitional housing and is now interviewing for construction jobs.

Brian is also working on his other passion, rap music. He's written songs chronicling the tremendous challenges, disappointments and sadness of his life. "I always wanted to be different in life," says Brian. "I always wanted to succeed, but I got off track for a few years. Now I'm back on track." ■

### DAVID TORREZ Hard Work Pays Off

Most people could take financial planning lessons from David Torrez. He doesn't have cable television, brown bags it to work everyday, goes to the store only for the basics and gets his clothes at discount stores. Sounds extreme, but all of this discipline has paid off. At 21, this former foster youth has saved up enough to put a down payment on his own home, a two-bedroom condo-

minium. Not bad for a boy who started out in life by helping his migrant worker grandparents pick grapes in the fields of central California.

David was raised in downtown Los Angeles, East Los Angeles and in small towns around Fresno, where he says he learned the value of hard work.

At that time, his grandparents took care of him, but David was placed in foster care during his sophomore year in high school, when he and his younger siblings were removed from his abusive mother and drug dealer father.

While living with his foster mother, David met DCFS social worker Michael Borboa, who gave him information about the Salvation Army Independent Living Program. Through the program, David lived off of a small stipend, worked two jobs and saved like crazy. He also graduated from the DCFS Independent Living Program. At the graduation ceremony, Michael showed up to support David.

"Michael was real proud. He helped me out a lot. He's like a mentor. He grew up in the same area, the same neighborhood I grew up in. He understands where I'm coming from so we connect better."

At 18 and urged by Michael, David moved out and eventually got into the DCFS Transitional Housing Program where he managed to save even more money. Michael also helped David get an Electrical Helper Trainee internship with the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department. And he now enrolled in a technical school studying to be an electrician.

But what David's most proud of right now is what many people take for granted – owning his first home. "Having my own place is like breaking a chain. I am the first one in my family to own a house."

David also credits the system that removed him from an abusive mother for changing his life.

"Without DCFS, I wouldn't have this job, I wouldn't be able to save all that money. If it wasn't for the foster care system, I don't know where I would have been. I could have been living on the streets. Being in the system gave me all these opportunities. I just did what I could with those opportunities." ■

"I always wanted to succeed, but I got off track for a few years. Now I'm back on track."

— Brian Joynter, former foster youth



**“This experience  
has caused a renewed  
sense of faith in us.  
We believe we were  
meant to find  
each other.”**

— Craig Rhea, adoptive parent

# Families

## Meant to Be

When Craig Rhea and Allen Kieffer met their future children, siblings Daniel, 7, and Carmen, 6, they knew it was meant to be. Daniel is loving, affectionate and ready to shower his new parents with hugs. Carmen is a “pistol,” according to her dads, determined and with a mind of her own. After a business trip to Washington, D.C., last spring, Daddy Allen gave her a T-shirt that said “Future President of the United States.” Carmen wears it with such self-confidence, they are sure she will reach the White House someday.

Through a match facilitated by The Kinship Center and with the help of devoted DCFS social workers, Craig and Allen met Carmen and Daniel in July 2003 and the kids moved in six weeks later. Since then it’s been a busy schedule of school, karate, ballet and playing with other kids on their tree-lined street in Hollywood.

“It’s been a balance of exhilaration and exhaustion,” says Craig. “Everything becomes new and a learning opportunity. It has made our lives so full.”

The adoption process was a successful collaborative effort and through it all, the couple said they had the support they needed. “We had such great support from everyone especially the social workers and The Kinship Center.” The adoption was finalized in August 2004.

Because the children are half Native Ameri-

can, fostering their unique heritage will be an important part of their upbringing. Carmen and Daniel have attended a camp focused on Native American culture and they also have a case manager who teaches them about their culture.

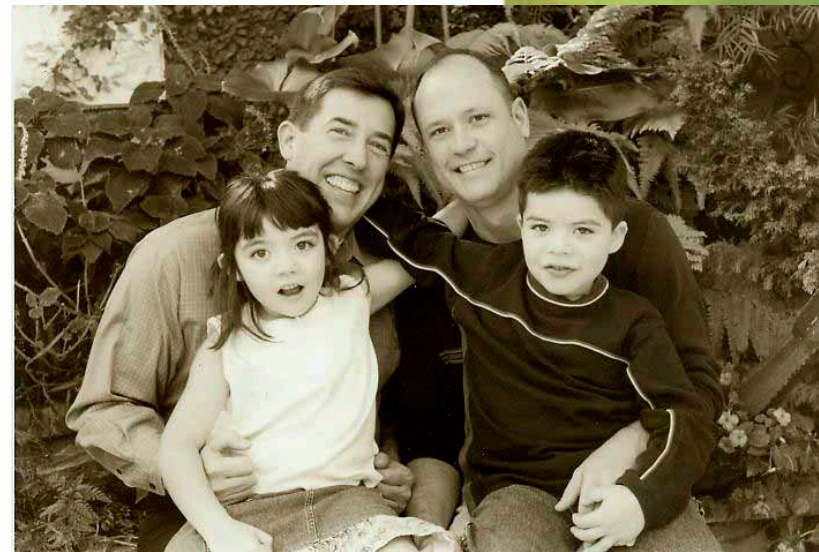
The kids visit their former foster parents every few months, the only long-term foster home they knew before being adopted. The foster parents, an older couple, serve as surrogate grandparents to Daniel and Carmen.

For now, Craig and Allen are focusing on filling their home with love. “This experience has caused a renewed sense of faith in us,” Craig says with a big smile. “We believe we were meant to find each other.” ■

## Mother Rises Above Past

On the wall in La Toyia Conway’s tiny, windowless office is a police photograph of a woman who has been beaten. The front and profile shot of a badly bruised and swollen face is La Toyia. When asked why she displays the graphic photo, she says she keeps it on her wall to remind her of how far she’s come.

That was La Toyia seven years ago. Back when she was an alcoholic, stuck in an abusive relationship that caused her to lose custody of all of her seven children, ranging in age from a one-month-old who was born with drugs in his system, to a 12-year-old daughter.



THE KIEFFER-RHEA FAMILY

All of her children were placed in foster care and La Toyia was ordered to attend drug and domestic violence treatment programs in the Antelope Valley. Through the years, social workers assigned to La Toyia’s case urged her to become sober by showing her how much she had to lose.

“It was a humbling experience,” La Toyia says. “Detaining my kids was a horrible feeling, but the system gave me a chance to get sober. My social worker told me, ‘You have two choices, your kids or your abusive man.’ DCFS saved my life when they detained my kids. It was a swift



LA TOYIA  
CONWAY AND  
FAMILY



**“DCFS saved my life when they  
detained my kids. It was a swift  
kick and a wake-up call.”**

— La Toyia Conway, parent



THE MORALES  
FAMILY

kick and a wake-up call.”

In 1999, La Toyia listened to that wake-up call. She decided to get sober and get off welfare. La Toyia says her first social worker was feisty and encouraging, but it was DCFS social worker Duane Hubler who impacted her life the most by suggesting Family Preservation Services. “He helped me get sober and he motivated me to get a house. Duane was very fair and firm. He talked to me like I was a person. He told me I could get my kids back – one step at a time.”

“She never became discouraged or lost motivation,” remembers Duane.

La Toyia is now married, off welfare, owns her own home and has been sober for six years. Because of all of the remarkable progress she’s made, all of La Toyia’s children have returned home and are doing well.

La Toyia also has a full-time job as a domestic violence facilitator at the same treatment program that originally helped her. She facilitates crisis interventions and motivates women to improve their lives. She assesses her clients, both female abusers and victims, to see if they have drug and alcohol problems. “No matter what someone told you, you can succeed” is her motto.

La Toyia now works with 46 women, but reaches about 400 people a month through motivational presentations. She works with DCFS and providers to see how the community can join together to offer the best services to clients. She has received two promotions at work and was named employee of the quarter and employee of the year. La Toyia proudly displays all of her certificates and achievements on her bedroom wall at home.

Someday, La Toyia says she hopes to run her own domestic violence shelter to further help women in need. ■

## Opening Their Hearts and Home to Foster Kids with Special Needs

A typical day at the Morales home starts early. Husband and wife team Milton and Bertha Morales wake at 5:30 a.m. to prepare for a day that includes caring for eight children, six of them with special

medical needs ranging in age from 5 to 15. Three are foster children and they have legal guardianship over three more. Two are the couple’s biological children.

After the children are woken up, washed, fed, given medication and shuttled off to school, there is still no time to relax. There is laundry to be done and grocery shopping. Doctors appointments fill some days. The children have ailments including mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and hearing loss. When all of the children arrive home in the late afternoon, there is some time for play, then it’s dinner and tucking them into bed. After everyone is asleep, Bertha and Milton begin preparing for the next day. At around 1 a.m., Bertha gets up to check on the kids while they sleep.

The extraordinary devotion of these foster parents is evident in the way the children lovingly react to them and the way they interact with the children with lots of hugs and attention. Their Compton home is sparse but spotless with brightly decorated bedrooms for the children. Milton had to add on four bedrooms to accommodate their growing number of medically fragile foster children they decided to care for. You have to be organized to handle this many children, notes Milton.

Originally from El Salvador, Bertha and Milton have numerous years of experience caring for children with special needs. Before they met and married 15 years ago, Bertha worked in a facility caring for medically fragile children. Before getting married, they discussed caring for special needs kids as part of their life together. Their two biological children help out.

“They’ve grown up with these children, so they’re used to it,” said Milton. Still, it’s hard for them to let go when the kids are adopted or reunited with their parents, something Bertha and Milton help facilitate by hosting many birth mothers for visits in their home. The Morales family has considered adopting the foster children they care for, but believe they can help more children by serving as foster parents.

Recently, an adoptive match was found for a 5-year-old medically fragile foster child under their care. “It will be hard to let her go,” said Milton. “But when they leave our home, we know it’s for an even brighter future.” ■

# Community Partners

## Mentoring Foster Youth

Being a mentor is not easy. To be a mentor and to do it right, you need to really be someone's friend, to be consistent, and to be able to deal with kids, many who have never had anyone consistent in their lives. These are the sentiments of Jim Baer, volunteer mentor of the year for DCFS. For the last two years, Jim has been mentoring a 15-year-old foster youth whose mother died and father is unknown.

Jim is part of a unique partnership between DCFS and the Los Angeles County Bar Association called the Bridges to the Future program. He has been instrumental in getting the young man a scholarship to a top private school. They spend time together on weekends and talk by phone daily to review homework. Jim has become a support for the entire family, as well. "As much as I thought I understood people, my understanding grew tremendously when I developed a relationship with him," says Jim.

Reflecting back on his own youth and his own need for a strong male role model has

helped Jim connect with the youth. Over two years, their relationship has resulted in transforming an angry, unmotivated and academically challenged youth into a funny, loving, young man. Jim sees him as "extremely bright and a good kid who desperately wants to succeed."

For Jim, mentoring is also a balancing act. He is a lawyer with a very busy practice. He also has a loving, supportive wife and three growing children who also need their father's attention. Although there was some jealousy at first, the children are proud of their dad and know that his mentoring is a good thing.

Jim's dedication to mentoring extends to his dream of starting a school for foster kids possibly a ranch for 10 youth that will provide a positive environment for young men. Andrew Bridge, President of L. A. Appleseed, a non profit organization working to build a school for foster youth and a good friend of Jim's, describes him as enormously sensitive and a caring mentor who follows through and doesn't give up.

Mentoring provides Jim with a lot of positive feedback. "You get more out of it than you put in," he says. "You have to be the best, wisest person you can be to mentor." ■

"You get more out  
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— Jim Baer, volunteer mentor of the year





CHRISTINE DEVINE  
AND A "WEDNESDAY'S  
CHILD" FAMILY



## 'Wednesday's Child' Celebrates 10-Year Partnership with DCFS

Every Wednesday and Sunday night on the Fox 11 10 o'clock News, children looking for loving families to call their own are profiled on a weekly news segment called "Wednesday's Child." In October 2004, Fox 11 celebrated 10 years of successfully finding homes for hundreds of Los Angeles County children waiting for adoption through "Wednesday's Child" (formerly called "Sunday's Child") sponsored by the Freddie Mac Foundation.

In the first four years of the program, 51 children featured were adopted, 36 awaited a court date to finalize their adoptions and 90 children had prospective adop-

tive families identified. "Wednesday's Child," a partnership between DCFS, Fox 11 and the Freddie Mac Foundation, boasts a 70 percent success rate with many harder-to-place older youth and sibling sets finding new homes.

Fox 11 reporter and anchor Christine Devine produces "Wednesday's Child." Devine, with the help of DCFS staff member William Wong, has been an integral part of creating positive outcomes for children. Devine has been honored numerous times by the community for her immense contribution to changing the lives of so many children.

For more information on "Wednesday's Child," go to [www.fox11la.com](http://www.fox11la.com) and click on the "Wednesday's Child" banner. ■

## The Teague Family Foundation

Ian and Janet Teague established The Teague Family Foundation in 1995. Since its inception, The Teague Family Foundation has generously served dozens of charities and made hundreds of scholarships available to foster children.

The Teague Family Foundation is a supporter of numerous charitable events designed to assist foster children in Los Angeles County. The foundation is among the sponsors of the annual Celebration I ceremony for graduating foster youth held each June. Over the years, The Teague Family Foundation has provided thousands of dollars in scholarships to foster youth who have obtained high academic achievement and have plans to further their education at college or a vocational school. In 2003, The Teague Family Foundation established an annual fundraising event for Celebration I called Rising Stars. This annual event has brought together the South Bay community to support foster youth and raise money for college scholarships. To date, more than \$60,000 has been raised

through Rising Stars.

The Teague Family Foundation also hosts annual holiday parties for hundreds of children under the supervision of the department, their families and friends.

Janet Teague first began advocating for foster youth when she served as a commissioner on the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families.

Ian Teague served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era as a captain in charge of mechanized vehicles at Anderson AFB, Guam, where he received an award for Outstanding Transportation Officer. After leaving the Air Force in 1971, Ian Teague successfully managed Ace Medical Co. He introduced medical devices such as the "halo" for broken necks and scoliosis, as well as external fixation, a new titanium module hip screw and intramedullary rods used in the repair of serious fractures. During his 20 years at Ace Medical, he successfully grew the company from a small orthotic brace manufacturing facility to a worldwide orthopedic fracture trauma company known for its innovative use of titanium.

In 1995, Ace Medical was sold to Johnson & Johnson and Ian Teague continued to manage the company for three years, increasing sales and profits by 50 percent. In 1998, he was awarded as one of the top 50 graduates of El Camino College. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from California State University Long Beach.

After retiring from business, Ian and Janet Teague became active in philanthropy, donating time to raise funds for local charities. In addition to DCFS, these include Little Company of Mary Hospital, YMCA, El Camino College, The Alliance for Children's Rights, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and the UCLA Department of Government and Public Policy. Each year, through the foundation's efforts, nearly \$400,000 is raised for local charities. ■

THE TEAGUE FAMILY  
FOUNDATION ANNUAL  
HOLIDAY PARTY FOR  
FOSTER CHILDREN





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